



STATEMENT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM

June 11, 2020

The Black Lives Matter demonstrations against systemic racism increase awareness of issues that continue to impact students and our community. Central Okanagan Public Schools acknowledges both schools' historic role in systemic racism and schools' required role in building empathy and teaching anti-racism.

Black Lives Matter protests across the United States are the result of centuries of oppression and violence. Similar protests in Canada, both in solidarity with those of our neighbours and in response to systemic racism in Canada, are likewise results of the oppression of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour (BIPOC). As an educational institution, we know now is the time to listen to BIPOC and other marginalized people, hear their truth, and learn together.

June is Pride Month, a time when our district celebrates inclusion and acceptance for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. The protests that coincide with this month remind us that the first Pride events in the U.S. were riots because of police brutality and discriminatory institutions.

As a public institution, we have a responsibility to oppose discrimination. This responsibility is why our schools teach young people to be critical thinkers and community contributors. It is why we strive to build better understanding of, and foster learning for, Indigenous ways of knowing. It is why we work to welcome immigrants to our schools and communities. It is only through knowledge, anti-racist education, and empathy that we can dismantle oppressive systems. Our children must see us demonstrate the courage to face our wrongs and learn to do better.

For comments, please contact:

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